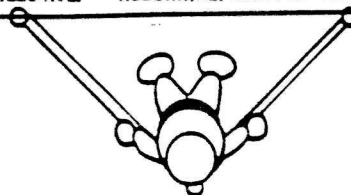


MATWATCH

Week of
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BRUISER BRODY MURDERED IN DRESSING ROOM BEFORE PUERTO RICO CARD SATURDAY

INVADER I, CARRIBEAN BABYFACE, ARRESTED ON FIRST DEGREE MURDER CHARGES

To those of you who had been expecting my Starrcade wish list, we will get to that next week.

As I write this, I have just put down the phone with a still-shaken Dave Meltzer and learned of the tragic death of Bruiser (Frank) Brody this past Sunday morning in the San Juan area.

Brody, 42, had been scheduled to meet Danny Spivey in the top match of the night. The details are still quite sketchy but apparently, Invader I (Jose Gonzales), booker for the World Wrestling Council, had asked Brody to a job and Brody refused. Reportedly, Brody was called into a dressing room by Invader for a private discussion at which time Invader pulled out a knife and stabbed Brody at least three times.

This occurred at 7:30 p.m. just before the scheduled start of the matches. Screams were heard from the area and police were called. Apparently, Gonzales was arrested and police made a deal for Invader I to actually work the card that night to avoid a fan riot over two lead performers not appearing. He was actually supposed to work a Sunday show and turn himself in on Monday, but none of the wrestlers showed for the Sunday card. Gonzales was arrested either Sunday or Monday and booked on first degree murder charges. He did work the Saturday show and heel wrestlers were told "a fan did it to Brody." Reports are that the crowd that night was not aware of Brody's stabbing.

Meltzer was told that Brody was conscious for approximately ten hours

before he passed away. Brody apparently was aware he likely would not survive.

Unconfirmed reports are that Invader I had been in a state of shock over the drowning death of his son recently but no precise motive has been published for the alleged murder.

On an international basis, Brody was probably one of the three biggest stars in pro wrestling, behind probably Hulk Hogan and Ric Flair. Whether in a 40,000-seat stadium in San Juan, or a packed hall in Japan, or before 225 at Henderson's Auction Barn in Marietta, Ga., Brody could electrify a crowd just by showing up.

Probably his last U.S. television match aired last weekend in Georgia markets when he went to a double count-out with Abdullah the Butcher in a classic Brody brawl.

Brody began his career in 1974 and had wrestled in virtually every state in America, mostly as a heel until his turns in most territories in the mid-1980s. He was known in the business as one of the best workers and perhaps the greatest brawler of all time. As one long-time Brody follower told me, "He was the kind of guy that if his opponent didn't sell a move properly, he'd make the guy do the move all over again and tell him, 'Now sell like I want you to sell!'"

In the mid-1980s, Brody split most of his American schedule between the AWA and World Class. His last major AWA appearance was in the WrestleRock supercard in 1986. Brody's final U.S. supercard was at the World Class Parade of Champions when he and Kevin Von Erich defeated Buddy Roberts and Solo-

mon Grundy. In The Observer, Meltzer wrote, "Brody's one-man show saved the day." That was often Bruiser's stock.

Meltzer said this week, "He was one of the two or three best friends I had in the entire business. I can't tell you how much he'll be missed. My phone didn't stop ringing for three days."

In the words of newspaper columnist Richard Hyatt: "You wake up and realize this isn't an angle for a TV show. It's the real world."

I was unsuccessful in contacting Joe Pedicino, who was also close to Brody.

I said just last week concerning Adrian Adonis that an incident like this brings home the reality that the men who spend their lives selling us on their immortality are just as mortal as we. However, this death was all too senseless. I never met Frank Goodish, but I felt I knew Bruiser Brody. In an era of cartoon exaggerations and mindless characterizations, Brody always made me want to watch because I knew he'd never work a bad match. I knew he would earn the price of my admission ticket several times over. And I knew he truly cared about his work. That is perhaps the highest compliment I can pay a pro wrestler. We will sorely miss him.

* * * * *

COMINGS & GOINGS

From the 7/18 Columbus, Ga. Bash: Sting won a DQ in a TV title match vs. Mike Rotunda (**½); The Fantastics won the 2-on-3 Bunkhouse match against the Midnight Express & Jim Cornette when Fulton pinned Cornette (**½); Dusty-Nikita-Steve Williams went to a double countout with Flair-Tully-Barry (**---Dusty only good for comedy); and the Road Warriors took the scaffold match over Uncle Ivan & the Russian Angel of Death (**).

My buddy Bruce (Big Bubba) Snyder of WTVM did a nice behind-the-scenes look at Crockett's TV operation. They taped both NWA Pro and World Wide and Sting-Rotunda likely for NWA MAIN EVENT. Bruce says the whole crew treated him well except for David Crockett.

Sting, of course, drew the biggest pop in Columbus and (not surprisingly to me) Dusty was right behind. He hasn't been in a Columbus ring in 3 years so a lot of folks were hungry to see him. Lots of I HATE RONNIE signs directed at Garvin in the crowd but no one knows if the signs were plants.

Jim Duggan was over big on last Friday's (7/15) FOX "Late Show." He talked a bit about his SMU football days but mostly plugged his L.A. match with Andre and did his Ed McMahon yell.

Joe Pedicino trying out an on-the-road format for PRO WRESTLING THIS WEEK. He did a couple of shows in Dothan, AL, and will probably hit several non-NWA arenas. Joe also just dropped the AWA from his weekend mix on WATL; USA is in.

On last Friday's Southern show, Rick Stewart and the wrestlers were apologizing for missing an announced 7/9 date in Columbus, which is always bad. They are scheduled again on 8/3, a Wednesday, the old NWA night in Columbus.

A newcomer for USA is billed as Terry Garvin, Jr. Don't know if he's a legit Garvin but he is groomed like Jimmy.

At the Columbus Bash, interviews were taped to push what will be a heel vs. heel feud in early fall between the Midnights & Tully & Arn over the world tag belts. Eaton & Arn got into a mild shoving match. Apparently, JCP plans to let the fans decide who becomes the faces. Neither team is happy about it as each feels they have to be heels to get over. I think that's particularly true in Cornette's case, but I bet the Midnights will draw the cheers.

At the upcoming Detroit bash, expect a face turn that will re-form an old tag team alliance from the Lone Star State.

My early word is that "The Council", Gary Hart's new alliance will put all of its heat on Dusty so the Big Ball of Cholesterol can again push himself.

Steve Chamberlain of Turner Home Entertainment is sure talking like Ted plans to own a wrestling company soon but no new definite word on NWA talks.

COMINGS & GOINGS (Cont. from page 2)

A class act: at Monday night's CWF show in Birmingham, Charlie Platt and Joe Pedicino told the fans of Brody's death and gave the traditional ten rings of the bell. Unprompted by the promotion, all of the faces and heels emerged from the dressing rooms and stood at attention in Brody's memory.

WWF has an 8/13 card scheduled in Montgomery as a police fundraiser headlined by Muraco-Valentine; Southern's 8/3 card in Columbus, Ga., topped by II-Robley and Rich-Prichard defending the Southern tag belts against the Batten twins.... A 7/31 Southern card in Marietta tops II & The Bullet vs. Robley and a mystery partner in a hair vs. mask match plus The RPMs vs. Johnny & Davey Rich.... Pedicino taped a Brody tribute for PMTW Sunday night in Marietta.

My Northwest correspondent Glenn Fox tells me about all the 8/3 Seattle Bash tickets left are \$14 balcony seats. This could be a \$250,000 gate.... Why does JCP dilute its possible videocassette sales by running the Midnight-Fantastics Baltimore match on NWA Main Event?

Finally, from the Democratic National Convention: flyers distributed by Thunderbolt Patterson & Jim Wilson accusing Ted Turner and Georgia legislators of racism in pro wrestling. They cited no black world champion (I guess that means Iceman Parsons didn't count), "only 5% of the wrestlers" are black, no black promoters or owners, but stated blacks are "responsible for 50 percent of the income." My colleague Richard Hyatt says it was one of the memorable moments of covering the convention.

TV TEMPO (Weekend of July 22-24)

(CWF) - Danny Davis wins countout over Tony Anthony when Anthony leaves to break up Mystic-Bambi brawl outside; Willie B. Hert over Lee Peek; Jerry Lawler DQ over Ken Wayne when Eddie Gilbert burns ref; Mr. Olympia d. Ken Glover; Sika d. Mike Gorea.

(SCW) - Bruiser Brody double countout with Abdullah the Butcher (taped 7/10); Battens over Gerald Finley & Jim Powers; Ranger Ross pins Rick Starr; Doug Somers/Ray Candy d. Chic Donovan/Roger Peterson; Robley/Rama Brown d. Steve Prichard/Joey Maggs.

(NWA) - TBS: Ric Flair d. Curtis Thompson; Lex Luger d. Keith Steinborn and other squashes plus buildup of

Midnight-Fantastics PPV match. Paul Jones threatens to fire Uncle Ivan & Russian Angel; WORLD WIDE & NWA PRO: Squashes and recap of PPV show; MAIN EVENT: Rick Steiner/Dick Murdoch d. Tim Horner/Kendall Windham; Al Perez/Larry Zbyszko d. Tommy Angel/Italian Stallion; Midnight-Fantastics PPV match.

(WORLD CLASS) - Solomon Grundy d. Bob Bradley; Kevin Von Erich wins Texas title on forfeit from Terry Taylor; Eric Embry d. Steve Casey in second of 2-3 Light heavy title series; Kerry-Kimela match still going at end of show.

(AWA) - Mat classic: Fabulous Ones win DQ over Road Warriors; Mando Guerro DQ over Pat Tanaka; Manny Fernandez tears up Wahoo's headress (how original!).

(USA) - Doug Furnas d. Bob Owens; Nelson Royal d. T.C. Powers; The Dog d. Kim Burchfield; Johnny & Davey Rich d. Buddy Landell/Hector Guerro when Johnny pins Landell and Hector attacks Buddy afterward; The Bullet does run-in on Bill Dundee and spansks Gummy.

(WWF) - SUPERSTARS: Jim Duggan d. Mike Sharpe; Hart/Neidhart d. Lanny Poffo/Scott Casey and other squashes; clips of Demolition's attack on Rick Martel; CHALLENGE: Powers of Pain d. Tony Parks/Brad Andrews; Both shows announce Jesse Ventura as ref for Andre/DiBiase-Savage/Hogan match on 8/29.

(MEMPHIS) - Phil Hickerson d. Shawn Baxter in CWA title match by using chain; Robert Fuller d. Alan Reynolds; Senshe d. Tommy King; Max Pain d. Ready; Billy Travis DQ over Brickhouse Brown; Lawler attacked by Fuller & Sylvia, gets help from Jeff Jarrett and tries to piledrive Sylvia, but is attacked by rest of Stud Stable before Pain-Travis-Baxter make save.

LINES OF THE WEEK --- 1. Jerry Lawler, Memphis, describing Sylvia: "If it weren't for her acne, she'd have no shape at all." 2. Paul E. Dangerously, PMTW, about the WWF: "I'm Roudier than Roddy and smarter than the Brain." 3. Tommy Rich, SCW: "Some people say Tommy Rich don't know how to rastle. Some people say Tommy Rich is outta shape." 4. Pedicino, WATL Superstars, on Missy Hyatt: "She has more personalities than a diamond has fossils."

BOD OF THE WEEK --- To all the organizations who failed to acknowledge both Brody's and Adrian Adonis' deaths because of their silly politics. At the same time, a major salute to Pedicino for rushing an insert into the weekend's PMTW. It can be done.

YOU ASKED FOR IT

At least once a month, we will take a break from our regular PROMOTER'S PROFILE and I REMEMBER... columns and try to answer some of the things on your mind. I've already had a number of questions tossed this way in July by readers. And we'll also let you air your tonsils in the corresponding YOU SAID IT... section.

So here go the inquiries from the current mailbag:

Q: Is Russ Francis doing anything with wrestling? He seemed to be involved with Verne (Gagne) for a while.

A: Russ has so many business interests that he would have little time for the ring these days and with the AWA being little more than a conduit for its ESPN contract and a booking office now, Russ would have little incentive. Remember, he also was part of the NFL/WWF battle royal at Wrestlemania II, so I guess there's always a chance he could make a guest appearance with another federation, but that's unlikely.

Q: Is Baby Doll Sam Houston's wife? Is Sam Houston Jake Roberts' little brother?

A: Yes and yes. In the case of Sam's brotherhood, Sam's real name is Mike Smith and brother Jake is Aurelian Smith. Both are the sons of former giant Jake (Grizzly) Smith, who grappled in the '50s, '60s and early '70s as one of the Kentuckians and was a later matchmaker for Bill Watts during the Mid-South years.

Q: What is going on with Shane Douglas and Humongous? Is Shane destined for stardom? Why did Shane leave the NWA?

A: As of this writing, Shane and Humongous have just won the Continental tag team titles from The D.I. (Bob O'Brien) and Detroit Demolition. The storyline, which

was never fully explained on TV, was that Shane was supposed to be a boyhood friend of Humongous but Shane wasn't supposed to know the masked man's true identity. I think with the right grooming, Shane can be a big star. Of course, he has family ties as Paul Orndorff's legit brother, Troy. But he left the NWA because after being promised a fairly good push, which he appeared to be getting as a so-called Magnum T.A. protege, the push abruptly stalled as seems to happen with so many younger stars in the Crockett organization.

Q: Why is Chris Champion still wrestling with the NWA doing jobs and never on the TV shows? What happened to his partner? I liked the New Breed.

A: One of my friends at the top wrestling magazine publishing company calls the dissolution of THE NEW BREED one of the worst mistakes in the business during 1987. I agree. About the only explanation I get is that Chris had a two-year contract after Crockett bought out the old Florida group and is hanging around to get his balloon payment. He did appear on TV this month as a sub partner for Jimmy Garvin against the Varsity Club but it was a bad showing for Chris, who is much more talented. Sean Royal left JCP late last fall, according to two reliable sources, because he was making very little money. I don't know why he hasn't surfaced elsewhere.

Q: Will the British Bulldogs leave Titan. If we (Stampede fans) lose Owen Hart to Titan, I think we should get at least the Bulldogs out of Titan in exchange.

A: Ah, but the business doesn't work that way in the U.S. unlike the no-steal agreement between Baba and Inoki in Japan. As long as they can outearn what they would make in a combination of Stampede and Japan, the Bulldogs will stay with the WWF as long as Vince wants them, but I think, as Meltzer recently said, their days as major title contenders are over. But don't bet on Owen being a long-termer with Titan if he can't be a major star.

YOU SAID IT...

My pet peeve: the camera coverage of TV matches. It STINKS and the NWA is the worst offender. The camera is glued to the "star" as though no one else were in the ring. The next time Sting puts on his reverse figure four leglock, watch where the camera goes. Drives me crazy.

Ken Scott
Everett WA

Ken is a new reader this week, as well as Joe Schmidt of Chicago. Remember, unless otherwise noted, for every two-month subscription to MATWATCH that comes as a direct reference by name of an existing reader, the referring subscriber receives two extra weeks free.

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